

QUESTIONS OF PRACTICE

Communities of Consciousness and the Begetting of Deborah Hay

By Bill Bissell

Communities of Consciousness and the Begetting of Deborah Hay

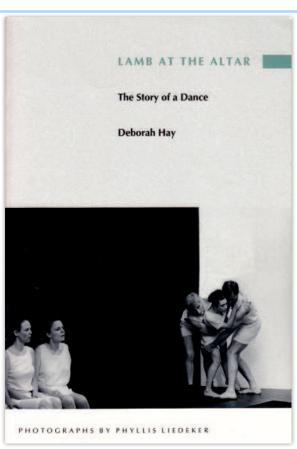
BY BILL BISSELL

Editorial note: This essay is a revision of a paper delivered at the University of Texas as part of An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of Deborah Hay Performance and Symposium, April 7 & 8, 2010. See Appendix B.

Midway through reading Deborah Hay's *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance*, I wasn't just hooked on the story—I was also filled with sadness. I had been overtaken by a sense of loss that came wrapped in words that chronicle the making of that eponymous dance.

I had to wrestle with this feeling again and again as I undertook my preparation for today's presentation. In trying to understand my esteem for this artist's work, I needed to confront why Deborah Hay's writings and her performance are able to make me so melancholic. Her work compels me to consider my responsibility for how well I tend to the questions that she formulates as 'tricks' to enter the choreography. It is as if her questions give shape to my doubt: doubt about who I am fundamentally, leading me into areas of grief that I now see as embedded in my body. They remind me how our emotional attachments are, in so many ways, arbitrary constructions, and that, inevitably, they will pass away.

What strikes me in Deborah's writings is how much necessity she places on removing the separation between thinking and doing; how the activity of motion is not a representation of something else. I think the separation of emotion from action is what brings me closer to the solitude that I feel so acutely in her work.



Front cover of *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance* by Deborah Hay, Duke University Press, 1994. Photo by Phyllis Liedeker Finley.

Deborah Hay's art personifies what individualized practice in dance can mean in our field, what it can become. She interrogates her own consciousness with rigorous questions that forge the content of the work she creates—on herself or with others—and which, in turn, challenges us to wrestle with the same questions when responding to what we see.

At a workshop in New York City on March 28, 2010, Deborah says:

"Dance training subverts my ability to separate from my personal experience." 1



Deborah Hay in *Voilà*, choreography by Deborah Hay, 1996. Photo by Todd V. Wolfson, from page 37 of *My Body, the Buddhist* by Deborah Hay, with foreword by Susan Foster, Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

I am no longer a professional dancer. I stopped dancing 17 years ago with any regularity. It is a good week when I can get to the gym four times where I do two sets of stretches in addition to time on cardiovascular equipment. I have never practiced yoga, Pilates, or meditation with any regularity, though in an earlier life I was introduced to each of these practices.

Deborah says:

"Our culture prizes the objectification of what we know—asks us to store it—not to release it."²

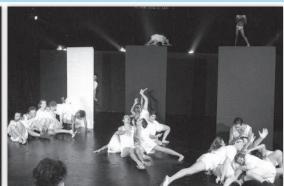
Why is it that I feel so fully engaged with the questions posed by Deborah Hay? The fact is I want more thinking like Deborah's in my community—not in imitation of her work, but engaged in the rigor that it calls forth. We want work that confounds expectations as to how and why dance happens. Isn't that the point for any art—to excavate knowing? Deborah's ideas liberate dance as they also create a discourse for it as a democratic impulse: Every body does it. Deborah writes, "What if where I am is what I need?" This question—along with others—is offered at the front of the dance score for No Time to Fly and was part of the workshop description for Practicing Performance.³ These queries ask for our attention and in the dance we see how they wed ideas to physicality.

These are not softball questions, crunchy granola truisms to make you feel good. They are foundational motivators that mark how Deborah uncovers her own consciousness. Her self-critique goes far beyond what I find in many artists. Frequently I hear artists express more concern about biographical rationale and stylistic preferences than interest in physical exploration as the basis for their esthetic values.

Deborah's interrogation of the body's relationship to itself can be unsettling. The questions she asks can become, in fact, confrontational. This is where I feel the issue of responsibility emerges. The work that Deborah follows (what Tere O'Conner calls "lines of research") is also meant to provoke the audience: How do I know—how am I capable of knowing—what my body feels? If I am not responsible for knowing this, who is? Am I not willing or able, or do I not want to intervene in this process? What happens then?







Left: Scott Heron in Voilà, choreography by Deborah Hay, 1997. Photo by Tom Brazil, from page 36 of My Body, The Buddhist.

Center: Image from lamb, lamb, lamb..., choreography by Deborah Hay, 1991. Photo by Phyllis Liedeker Finley, from the front cover of Lamb at the Altar.

Right: Image from lamb, lamb, lamb..., choreography by Deborah Hay, 1991. Photo by Phyllis Liedeker Finley, from page 75 of Lamb at the Altar.

Deborah says:

"How do I create tricks to maintain a non-attachment to the personal experience?"

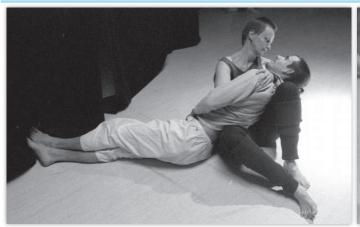
The idea of non-attachment in this question is declared with an insistence that leads me to hear Deborah's own search within the question. This is not rhetoric simply to elicit a particular understanding or interpretation from the listener, but a question formed by the passion of her own engagement with the ideas she is putting forth. Isn't that her challenge to us: how engaged are we?

In my listening I also hear the silence embedded on the other side of the question, a silence that makes me listen hard for fear there will be nothing to uncover in response. I do not believe these questions are singular to Deborah, that others have not asked them before—probably for centuries or millennia. But there *is* something different going on here, something remarkably brave: how each gesture we make exists in an arc that carries both its beginning and end. "Wherever I am dying is," she writes.

Deborah says:

"I need to trick myself into being interested in being here, seeing time passing, staying here. Here. Gone. Here. Gone. Here. Gone."⁵

Deborah Hay is an artist whose 380 trillion cells will not be duplicated in another body, even as she admits to how significantly they have been impacted by every relationship she has ever had in the past or will have in the future. She asks her questions from where she is now, freshly and insistently, because each moment is born new, and the questions will be renewed in the content of the work.





Images from lamb, lamb, lamb..., choreography by Deborah Hay, 1991. Photos by Phyllis Liedeker Finley, from Lamb at the Altar, left: p. 13, right: p. 27.

Deborah says:

"Right now my sense of practice is to learn without thinking: that is my practice. It is about me, my experience, not anyone else's."

Looting—the act of looting, involving both a perp and a victim—strikes me as a central theme of *My Body, the Buddhist*. The idea of looting comes from a passage in the text that outlines a libretto documenting a dream about a medieval hunter. This recovered dream brought the book into haunting focus for me. I saw the action of the looter serving as an interpretive thread into Deborah's choreographic mind.

At the March 2010 workshop in New York she spoke about the need to "...[trick] ourselves out of our thinking mind; out of our...history of habits." Isn't this how Deborah guides herself and her dancers: that they need to loot their lives in order to find their consciousness? I believe the process of looting—of taking everything and anything she can find within her physical, emotional, or intellectual grasp is how Deborah finds—no, takes—her own body back from the social context in which she and the rest of us exist.

I find many dance artists (at least in Philadelphia) reticent to call themselves choreographers—preferring to call themselves movement directors, or just directors, or movement artists. They feel that the word "choreographer" is too delimiting as a descriptor of what they do or, rather, what they want to do. Yet Deborah still owns the values contained in this word as she, through her career, has transformed its meaning to accommodate her own terms.

I would say that consciousness is the mother lode from which her choreographic thinking and her teaching emerge. She wants us to know the full life of her (read "our") body—all 380 trillion cells and counting. Nothing less will do. She writes: "I recognize my choreography when I see a dancer's self-regulated transcendence of his/her choreographed body within in a movement sequence that distinguishes one dance from another." Choreography here is about consciousness made manifest through the performer. This is the deep song of her dancing, her object of desire—consciousness: hers and that of her audience.





Left: Deborah Hay in Voilà, choreography by Deborah Hay, 1997. Photo by Tom Brazil, from page 39 of My Body, the Buddhist.
Right: Image from lamb, lamb, lamb,.., choreography by Deborah Hay, 1991. Photo by Phyllis Liedeker Finley, from the title page of Lamb at the Altar.

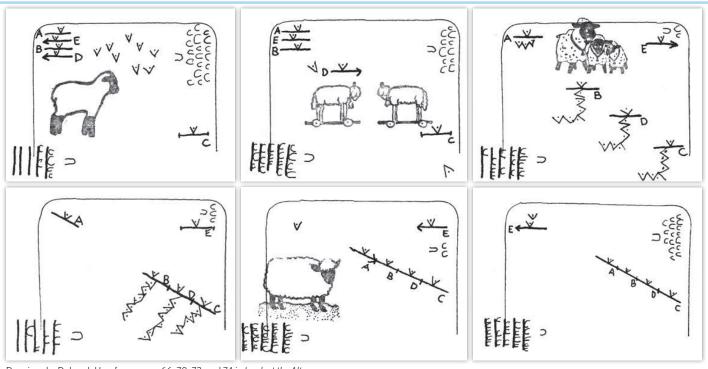
So, I have come to wonder, is Deborah using my consciousness—as I participate in the performance as an audience member—to create her dance? Is this looting of my consciousness a goal of Deborah's dances? While this may subvert the intention of the artist's stated goals—that the work is all about her—isn't looting in this sense the objective of any theatrical art?

The dances I have seen choreographed by Deborah, along with her written chronicles, trigger thoughts about the nature of my own responsibility as an audience member. There are times when I may not always be able to tell you exactly why something happens in a dance by Deborah Hay, other than to physically describe the action in front of me. However, she accomplishes what she sets out to do: calling out the need to be attentive to the body. Me, my fellow audience members, the dancers in her group work, Deborah herself—each of us are implicated in responding to the faceted question: How do we understand the life of our own bodies? How am I able to re-see dance and the ideas contained in the body? She marshals her material for larger ends, helping us to see more deeply into dance as a form of intelligence, rediscovering its capacity for ideas, understanding more fully what the body knows. "The dance is how I learn without thinking."

Deborah says:

"That beautiful thing about dance: drawing our attention, allowing us to see, really see, time passing; sadness and beauty." 9

Deborah Hay makes dances that become emblematic of the communities who perform them. In both *Lamb* at the *Altar* and *My Body, the Buddhist*, she describes in detail how within these voluntary associations she negotiates the politics of the group. Deborah works within the form of her body as it exists in real time and space. In contrast, the totem figure that slips in and out of view in *No Time to Fly* is not the representation of an image, but is the vision of her body's internal, choreographic image. This dialectic is always present in Hay: the oscillation between other bodies and her own. Lovingly she reminds us that every body contains the trillions of cells that make "being seen" possible.



Drawings by Deborah Hay, from pages 66, 70, 72, and 74 in Lamb at the Altar.

Inevitably, Deborah does manipulate the audience's experience and in this she reveals similarities with other choreographers. I would not say, however, that her work is somehow more pure—it is just that the motivating ideas yield content that is about the transition of the life of the body one moment, one movement at a time. Our attention returns to the body in ways that are more complex than what either the representation or abstraction of image can convey on its own.

How many seconds have we lived—right now? Each second brings Deborah again and again to the realization that it is cellular consciousness that takes her whole body along as its own teacher. From her dance lessons as a child, to her engagement with Judson creativity, through the era of the Warren Street Loft, through Merce she arrived in Austin to become part of her own "unobstructed field of vision," arriving at this non-representational cellular level of dance.

Deborah says:

"My dance training was not enough material to feed me as a dancer-choreographer; for others, yes, this may be enough but for me, no. Not for 40 years has it been enough." 10



Dress rehearsal of Deborah Hay in *No Time to Fly*, choreographed by Deborah Hay. Photo by Rino Pizzi, December 11, 2009.

I think we are missing something, however, if we only look at the work in relationship to the questions that choreographically motivate it, no matter how provocative they may be. In our relationship with ourselves, no matter how rigorous our practice, is it ever possible to sever the body from the context through which it has moved—to only consider the inner imperatives that make motion possible kinetically, anatomically, cellularly?

Deborah says:

"I am choreographing how I am seeing." 11

Deborah's choreography is about both the native and the non-native parts of our existence; I can slip in and out of watching Deborah perform inside and outside her body. I see the body talk to itself—leg to torso or foot, or arm and hand to head—and see the performer discover other bodies around her as she makes her map of the stage.



Left and center: Dress rehearsal of Deborah Hay in *No Time to Fly*, choreographed by Deborah Hay. Photos by Rino Pizzi, December 11, 2009. Right: Partial image from *lamb*, *lamb*, *lamb*, ..., choreography by Deborah Hay, 1991. Photo by Phyllis Liedeker Finley, from page 92 of *Lamb at the Altar*.

I love this part of Deborah's story: that you see all of her as well as those that begat her as part of her dancing body.

There was a moment in reading Lamb at the Altar when I knew I was hooked, that the book had actually become a page-turner for me and that I cared about what was going to happen—that I had to keep reading. It was around the time of Chris McCarthy's incarceration in the Austin jail on page 35 when I had this realization. Chris, for those of you who have not read the book, was a gregarious participant involved in making this large group dance. His history with the ensemble was many-sided and his sudden loss was a dramatic intervention in the unfolding narrative: a dancer gone rogue. I was in love with this story.

Deborah's approach to chronicling her dancing life accumulates over time, page by page, dance by dance. It involves obsessive detail in one sense. It also charts with gratifying materiality her ongoing negotiation of the dynamics of power and powerlessness that come with organizing schedules, directing performers, of being both a leader and a follower in a creative practice with others. It is the nature of community, the dance of the 'me of we.'

Her choreography is what we see—tilted arm walk, stepping circle pattern on the diagonal, describing a particular route across the stage, our field of vision. Her writing is what we hear, marking our way with questions to help us experience all of our 380 trillion cells, and counting.

Indeed, what if everything we need is here?

Author Acknowledgments

In the course of preparing this paper, both for its initial presentation in Austin and subsequently for this posting on The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage website (where I direct their program in dance), I have several people and institutions to thank.

I received the invitation to speak about Deborah Hay from Rino Pizzi. His support and encouragement of my efforts to formulate a critique of Deborah's work was especially important. Mr. Pizzi has also been invaluable in helping assemble the visual materials for this posting.

The Center for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin organized the symposium An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of Deborah Hay in April 2010, and their sponsorship made possible a special opportunity for many people to gather and reflect on this choreographer's work. I want to acknowledge several individuals at UT for their role in making the event such a welcoming experience for this outsider: Susan Sage Heinzelman, director of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies; Rebecca Rossen, professor of Performance as Public Practice; Patricia J Heisler, senior administrative associate for CWGS; Nancy K Ewert, program coordinator, CWGS; and Alma J Salcedo, academic affairs and graduate coordinator.

In reentering my manuscript—revising it and re-reading my notes and Hay's writings for this publication—I found myself immersed in a world of ideas that continue to radiate meaning. Hay's investigation of the body as our primary teacher about life—the vehicle for our sensorium—has yielded continuous rewards for me. I have discovered a Joan Didion of movement, and I am grateful every time I return to Hay's calming phrase, "Turn your fucking head." Dance is both movement and ideas, simply without words.

Bill Bissell September 2012

Footnotes

- Quotations from Deborah Hay workshop, Practicing Performance, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010, transcribed by Bill Bissell. View the flyer here.
- Ibid.
- 3. Program description from Deborah Hay workshop, *Practicing Performance*, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010.
- Quoted from Deborah Hay workshop, Practicing Performance, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010, transcribed by Bill Bissell.
- **5.** Ibid.

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- How do I recognize my choreography? Essay by Deborah Hay, 2007. deborahhay.com/notes.html
- Quoted from Deborah Hay workshop, Practicing Performance, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010, transcribed by Bill Bissell.
- **9.** Ibid.
- **10.** Ibid
- **11.** Ibid.

Bibliography / Source Material

Bill Bissell concert notes, *No Time to Fly*, Danspace Project, New York City. March 25, 2010.

Bill Bissell personal concert notes, *No Time to Fly*, Long Center for the Performing Arts, Austin, TX, April 7, 2010.

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Libretto, No Time to Fly, Deborah Hay, 2010.

My Body, the Buddhist, Deborah Hay, with foreword by Susan Foster, Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

Quoted material from notes by Bill Bissell written during the Deborah Hay workshop, *Practicing Performance*, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010.

utexas.edu/cola/centers/cwgs/news/2444

 $\underline{www.rinopizzi.com}$

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Appendices

Appendix A

Deborah Hay workshop, *Practicing Performance*, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010

Appendix B

Symposium program, An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of Deborah Hay, April 8, 2010

Appendix C

Performance program, No Time to Fly, Long Center for the Performing Arts, Austin, TX, April 7, 2010

Appendix D

The Rightness of Movement: Photographs by Phyllis Liedeker Finley of the work of Deborah Hay (1982-97)

APPENDIX A:

Deborah Hay workshop, Practicing Performance, Movement Research at Eden's Expressway, New York City, March 28, 2010

Deborah Hay Workshop



Photo by Rino Pizzi

WORKSHOP

Deborah Hay March 28 | Sunday | 2:30 PM -5:30 PM

\$50 Movement Research at Eden's Expressway SOLD OUT

Practicing Performance
"What if where I am is what I need," is not an examination of what I need but an examination of the question "What if where I am is what I need?" What if less is more is not less? What if dance is how I practice my relationship with my whole body in relationship to the space where I am dancing in relationship to each passing moment in relationship to my audience? What if the depth of the question is on its surface?

Do not miss Deborah Hay's return to solo performance at Danspace Project in No Time to Fly

PLATFORM 2010: Back to New York City Deborah Hay | No Time to Fly

March 25-27, 2010 • [Thu-Sat] • 8:00 PM Admission: \$18 (\$12 for members)

Buy Tickets Now!

"If I am to really admit and celebrate the ephemeral nature of dance, then I must learn to see, experience, and respect time passing." - Deborah Hay



Deborah Hay will give an artist talk at The Cooper Union.

Artist Talk with Deborah Hay: A Lecture on the Performance of Beauty March 24, 2010 • [Wed] • 7:00 PM Admission: FREE

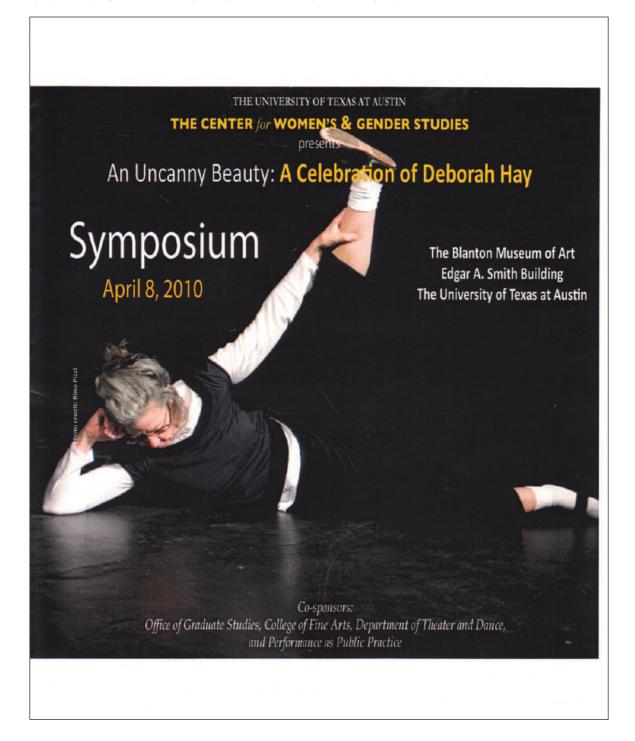
Location: The Great Hall, The Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street, NYC; www.cooper.edu

Join groundbreaking choreographer Deborah Hay for a talk framed around the question 'can a formal and stimulating adherence to a prescribed set of hypothetical conditions be seen as choreography even if there is no learned movement?'

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APPENDIX B:

Symposium program, An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of Deborah Hay, April 8, 2010



An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of Deborah Hay

The work of dancer/choreographer Deborah Hay has had a significant influence on the international landscape of dance and performance since the 1960s. From her work with the Judson Dance Theater in the 60s, through her group work and solo projects from the 70s through the 90s, to the current revitalization of her experimental focus on performance and choreography, Hay's work constitutes a substantial contribution to the re-definition of contemporary aesthetic practices that marks the second half of the twentieth century.

The panels, discussions, and performance that are a part of An Uncanny Beauty explore Hay's work from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the complexity of her aesthetic experimentalism to the political and cultural implications of her radical approach to dance and choreography. The symposium is designed to extend recent debates on performance and its role in the arts. Panelists and discussants include scholars, dancers, choreographers, historians, and authors from different countries and traditions who have followed Hay's work over her career and recognize her impact on the dance world in North America and Europe.

Panel Schedule

10:00 - 11:30 AM
Consciousness, Body, and Practice
Chair - Susan Heinzelman
Panelists: Christopher House, Tere O'Connor, Karen Schaffman

Lunch Break

1:15 - 2:45 PM
Politics, Counterculture, and Community
Chair - Charlotte Canning
Panelists: Bill Bissell, Danielle Goldman, Gabriel Smeets

3:00 - 4:30 PM
Aesthetics, Art, and History
Chair - Rebecca Rossen
Panelists: Ann Daly, Nina Martin, Selma Odom

Biographical Sketches of Participating Scholars

Bill Bissell

Bill Bissell has served as director of Dance Advance since 1999. Dance Advance is an artistic initiative of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage located in Philadelphia. Before that, he was the residency and education manager for Dance Alloy in Pittsburgh, PA. Between 1992 and 1996, Bissell developed assessment and interpretive strategies for preserving the photographic work of Arnie Zane with Bill T. Jones and the California Museum of Photography. He chronicled this work in **The Body As Evidence:** Recovering A Memory (in Continuous Replay: The Photographs of Arnie Zane, MIT Press, 1999). Bissell has also written for Dance Now and for the Dance Advance website, where he published "Growing up Royal," a suite of profiles on ballet répétiteurs Georgina Parkinson, Julie Lincoln, and Patricia Ruanne. From 1980 to 1993 he danced in his own work and that of other choreographers, including Holly Fairbank, David Dorfman, and Bella Lewitzky; and in productions at the Washington, DC Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, the Berkeley New Music Theater Festival, and The Yard. Bissell holds an MFA in dance from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

Charolotte Canning

Charlotte Canning is Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance here at UT where she heads the Performance as Public Practice MA/MFA/PhD programs. She is the author of Feminist Theaters In The USA: Staging Women's Experience and The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance which won the 2006 Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History. This fall will see the publication of Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography, an anthology co-edited with Tom Postlewait.

Ann Daly

Ann Daly, PhD (www.anndaly.com) is a fem-evangelist devoted to the success and advancement of women. Before reinventing herself as a coach/consultant, she was a journalist and then dance studies professor. Her newest book is entitled **Do-Over!** How Women Are Reinventing Their Lives. Sign up for Dr. Daly's eletter and blog at: www. anndaly.com.

Danielle Goldman

Danielle Goldman is Assistant Professor of Dance History and Theory at The New School. She has published articles in Dance Research, Dance Research Journal, Etcetera, Movement Research Performance Journal, TDR: The Drama Review, and Women & Performance. Her book about the politics of improvised dance- I Want to be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom- will be published by the University of Michigan Press in April. She has performed most recently with Beth Gill and DD Dorvillier.

Susan Sage Heinzelman

Susan Sage Heinzelman is the director of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and is an associate professor in the English Department. She received her PhD from the University of Western Ontario and her BA from the University of London. She is an award-winning teacher who in addition to the courses she offers for English has also taught extensively in Law and various interdisciplinary programs on campus. Dr. Heinzelman was the president and is still on the board of the Association for the Study of Law, Culture and Humanities. She published a book (co-edited with Zipporah Wiseman) entitled Representing Women: Essays in Law, Literature and Feminism in 1994. Her newest book, Riding the Black Ram, was published in 2010.

Christopher House

Artistic Director of Toronto Dance Theatre since 1994, Christopher House is one of Canada's leading choreographers. Born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland, he studied Political Science and Philosophy before switching to Theatre and Dance. His commitment to ongoing research and education continues to inform the development of his artistic practice. He has been Resident Choreographer of TDT since 1981 and has contributed over sixty works to the repertoire including *Glass Houses, Four Towers, Early Departures, Vena Cava, Nest and Sly Verb.* He has also created choreographies for Portugal's Ballet Gulbenkian, the National Ballet of Canada, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Ballet British Columbia, and for soloists such as Peggy Baker and Guillaume Côté. House's recent works include *Chiasamata* (2007), *Dis/(sol/ve)r* (2009) and *Pteros Tactics* (2010). *Timecode Break,* a commission from the Canada Dance Festival and a co-production with the National Arts Centre and the Banff Centre for the Arts, was named "Best Canadian work" by The Globe and Mail, and "Best new contemporary dance" by The Toronto Star in 2006. Christopher House received the Muriel Sherrin Award for International Achievement in Dance in October 2009. As a performer, House has appeared in his own works and in those of Sarah Chase, Peter Chin, David Earle, James Kudelka, Mark Morris, Peter Randazzo and Deborah Hay. As a guest with Les Grand Ballets Canadiens, he performed the title role in Michel Fokine's *Petrouchka*, in works by Nijinska and Kudelka, and in his own solo work *Schubert Dances*. He premiered his adaptation of *News* by Deborah Hay in December 2006, and presented five

performances of this solo at the Canada Dance Festival in June 2008. His adaptation of Hay's At Once received its premiere in Toronto on April 1, 2010. Christopher House is Artistic Advisor of the Professional Training Program of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. He has taught technique, improvisation, repertoire and creative process at such institutions as the Juilliard School, Rotterdam Dansacademie and Jacob's Pillow, and at Ryerson, Simon Fraser and York Universities. Christopher House is an Associate Dance Artist of Canada's National Arts Centre.

Nina Martin

Nina Martin's choreographic projects have received numerous grants and awards including multiple fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and private foundations. She has taught and performed extensively in North America including Canada as well as in Venezuela, Russia, Finland, Lithuania and many other European countries and she returns to Japan in May 2010. Performance credits include Steve Paxton in the PBS Dance in America: Beyond the Mainstream, David Gordon Pick Up Company, Mary Overlie, Nancy Topff, Simone Forti and Martha Clarke. Additionally she has performed and collaborated with numerous artists including Deborah Hay and most recently in collaborative performance with Shelley Senter and Lower Left at Danspace NYC. She has served on the faculties of UCLA's Department of World Art and Cultures and New York University's Experimental Theatre Wing. Her article Ensemble Thinking: Compositional Strategies for Group Improvisation (2007, Contact Quarterly 32 (2).) presents Martin's innovative improvisational system. This work and ReWire: Dancing States receive a thorough examination in Melinda Buckwalter's upcoming book Composing While Dancing (University of Wisconsin Press). A founding member of Channel Z (NYC), New York Dance Intensive, and Lower Left (www. lowerleft.org < http://www.lowerleft.org>) she presently is a board member of Marfa Live Arts, which hosts the March 2 Marfa Performance Labs and Dance Ranch Marfa workshops in Marfa, Texas and Berlin. Martin is an Assistant Professor at Texas Christian University and ABD in the PhD degree program in Dance at Texas Woman's University.

Selma Odom

Selma Landen Odom, Professor Emerita at York University in Toronto, is a dance historian and writer. Her articles and reviews have appeared in many publications since the 1960s, and she has contributed chapters to several books and reference works. She co-edited the anthology Canadian Dance: Visions and Stories (2004) published by Dance Collection Danse. Her research focuses on teachers and oral transmission in twentieth-century dance and music. Dr. Odom was awarded the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Teaching Award in 1998 in recognition of her contributions to the advancement of academic excellence and the quality of graduate teaching at York University.

Tere O'Connor

Tere O'Connor has been making dances since 1982. He has created over thirty works for his company and performed throughout the US and in Europe, South America and Canada. O'Connor has also created numerous commissioned works for dance companies around the world, among these have been solo work for Mikhail Baryshnikov and works for the Lyons Opera Ballet. He is 2009 United States Artist Rockefeller fellow, a 2009 recipient of Map Fund award, Creative Capital grant and NDP production grant. He is the recipient of repeated grants from many other funding organizations and foundations including a 1993 Guggenheim Fellowship. O'Connor has received three "Bessie's", New York Dance and Performance Awards, most recently for his work *Frozen Mommy* (2005). He is a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign where he resides for the spring semester. He is an active participant in the New York dance community mentoring young artists, teaching, writing, curating and volunteering in various capacities. O'Connor's company continues touring the recent work *Rammed Earth* and recently premiered their new work *Wrought Iron Fog* at Dance Theater Workshop in November of 2009 and will have a return engagement there in June 2010.

Rebecca Rossen

Rebecca Rossen (Ph.D., Northwestern University) is a dancer, choreographer, and dance scholar whose research focuses on twentieth-century American dance, theatrical stagings of identity, and the relationship between theory and practice, scholarship and performance. s a dancer, Rossen has performed with numerous companies and choreographers, including the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Hedwig Dances, the Cook County Theatre Department, Loop Troop, XSight! Performance Group, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Audio Gruppe (Germany), Annat Shamgar (Israel), and Baldanza (Italy). Rossen's choreography has been presented internationally at the HaBama Theater in Jerusalem, Israel; nationally at the Society of Dance History Scholars, Cleveland Experimental Dance Festival, the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, and the American College Dance Festival; and at venues throughout her hometown of Chicago. Prior to joining UT's faculty in 2008 as an assistant professor, Rossen taught dance history and performance practice at Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, George Mason University, and the Dance Center of Columbia College, as well as numerous Chicago-area dance studios.

Karen Schaffman

Karen Schaffman is a dance artist based in San Diego. She earned a doctorate from University of California (UC) Riverside and is an alum of the European Dance Development Center. Her research is based in perceptual practice, traumatic injury, choreographic authorship, and the philosophies of Deborah Hay. Her work has been presented by Sushi Performance

& Visual Art, California Center for the Arts Escondido Museum, K3, among other venues. Dr. Schaffman has published in Taken By Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader, Contact Quarterly, and the upcoming Encounters with Contact Improvisation. She has been on faculty at TuT (Hanover) and UC Davis and has taught improvisation at festivals and schools internationally. Currently, Dr. Schaffman is Chair of the Visual & Performing Arts Department at California State University San Marcos and Program Director of the Arts & Lectures Series. She is also Artistic Director of PADL West, a newly founded non-profit organization fostering creative collaborations and dialogues concerning dance and culture.

Gabriel Smeets

Gabriel Smeets is the artistic director of SNDO, the school for new dance development in Amsterdam. As a dramaturge he created works with the Dutch theatre company Paralyse D'Amour, choreographers Krisztina de Chatel, Nora Heilmann, Pere Faura, performance artist Marina Abramovic, fashion designer Aziz Bekkaoui and theatre director Ibrahim Quraishi. Until recently Smeets was the dance editor for the Dutch monthly magazine TM (Theatermaker). He curated the symposium Dance Unwrapped at the Dance Theatre Workshop DTW in New York in 2006 and he is also the editor of Why all these questions? published in 2003 (Theatre Institute of the Netherlands). In April 2008 he was the interim artistic director of the Springdance festival in Utrecht. He works and lives in Amsterdam.

Keynote Speech - 5:30 PM

Susan Leigh Foster

"Practicing Thinking Dancing"

The lecture locates Hay's work in relation to prevailing notions of choreography in order to demonstrate the radical and inclusive politics embodied in her artistic practice.

Susan Leigh Foster, choreographer and scholar, is Professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA. She is the author of Reading Dancing, Choreography and Narrative, Dances that Describe Themselves, and editor of Choreographing History, Corporealities, and Worlding Dance. She is currently working on a genealogy of the terms choreography, kinesthesia, and empathy.

The Blanton

Deborah Hay



Deborah Hay was born in Brooklyn. Her mother was her first dance teacher, and directed her training until she was a teenager. She moved to Manhattan in the 1960s, where she continued her training with Merce Cunningham and Mia Slavenska. In 1964, Hay danced with the Cunningham Dance Company during a 6-month tour through Europe and Asia. Deborah Hay was a member of a group of experimental artists that was deeply influenced by Merce Cunningham and John Cage. The group, later known as the Judson Dance Theater, became one of the most radical and explosive 20th century art movements. In 1970 she left New York to live in a community in northern Vermont. Soon, she distanced herself from the performing arena, producing 10 "Circle"

Dances," performed on 10 consecutive nights within a single community and no audience whatsoever. In the late 1990's Deborah Hay focused almost exclusively on rarified and enigmatic solo dances based on her new experimental choreographic method, such as *The Man Who Grew Common in Wisdom, Voilà, The Other Side of O, Fire, Boom Boom, Music, Beauty, The North Door, The Ridge, Room,* performing them around the world and passing them on to noted performers in the US, Europe, and Australia. She also choreographed a duet for herself and Mikhail Baryshnikov, *Single Duet,* which toured with the Past/Forward project in 2000. In 2007 she received a BAXten Award. The award was presented with the following words: "Your experimental work has remained alive & contemporary over four decades, inspiring your colleagues and peers and now - new generations of choreographers & performers. Your sustained commitment and your willingness to change course provides an example for others. Your articulate writing on the body & dance has had a profound impact on the field." In October 2009 the Theater Academy in Helsinki, Finland, conferred on Deborah Hay an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Dance at the Doctoral Degrees Graduation Ceremony.

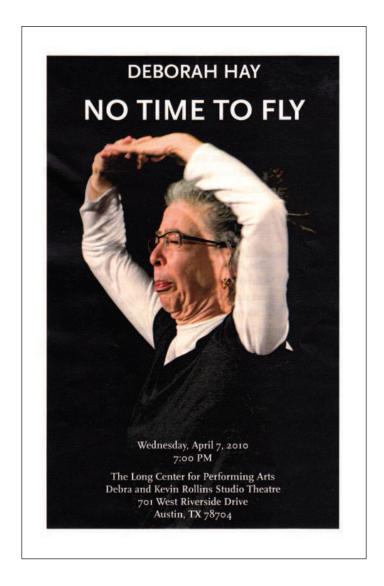


Sponsored by the **Center** for **Women's & Gender Studies**The University of Texas at Austin
Symposium Coordinator - Rino Pizzi
For more information, please visit: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cwgs

Dirk Deceller

APPENDIX C

Performance program, No Time to Fly, Long Center for the Performing Arts, Austin, TX, April 7, 2010



No Time to Fly

April 7, 2010 7:00 PM

Long Center for the Performing Arts Debra and Kevin Rollins Studio Theatre

Choreography and performance: **Deborah Hay**

"As in my other dances,
No Time To Fly attempts to
adhere to what I consider the
most unique attribute of dance,
its ephemeral existence."

No Time to Fly is approximately 50 minutes long

LIGHTING: Jennifer Tipton

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Laura Mroczkowski

STAGE MANAGER: Diana Prechter

CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION: Susan Norwood

No Time To Fly Project director: Michèle Steinwald

DEBORAH HAY

Deborah Hay was born in 1941 in Brooklyn. Her mother was her first dance teacher, and directed her training until she was a teenager. She moved to Manhattan in the 1960s, where she continued her training with Merce Cunningham and Mia Slavenska. In 1964, Hay danced with the Cunningham Dance Company during a 6-month tour through Europe and Asia. At the same time she was a member of a group of experimental artists that was deeply influenced by Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and John Cage. The group, the Judson Dance Theater, became one of the most radical and explosive 20th century art movements.

By 1967, Hay had already achieved a prominent status as a young choreographer, and her unique style began to emerge as a distinct voice within the aesthetics of Judson. Sharing with her colleagues the ideas that dance engage with other art forms, and that the artificial distinction between trained and untrained performers be challenged, she focused on large-scale dance projects involving untrained dancers, fragmented and choreographed music accompaniment, and the execution of ordinary movement patterns performed under stressful conditions.

In 1970 she left New York to live in a community in northern Vermont. Soon, she distanced herself from the performing arena, producing *Ten Circle Dances*, performed on 10 consecutive nights within a single community and no audience whatsoever. Thus began a long period of reflection about how dance is transmitted and presented. Her first book, **Moving Through the Universe** in Bare Feet (Swallow Press, 1975), is an early example of her distinctive memory/concept mode of choreographic record, and emphasizes the narratives underlining the process of her dancemaking, rather than the technical specifications or notations of their form.

In 1976 Hay left Vermont and moved to Austin, Texas. Her attention focused on a set of practices ("playing awake") that engaged trained and untrained dancers on several levels of consciousness at once. While developing her concepts over the course of 15 years, she instituted a yearly four-month group workshop that culminated in large group public performances in Austin, and from these group pieces she distilled her solo dances. Her second book, Lamb at the Altar. The Story of a Dance (Duke University Press, 1994), documents the unique creative process that defined these works.

From the early 1990's Hay focused almost exclusively on the performance of her solo works, such as *The Man Who Grew Common in Wisdom, Voilà, The Other Side of O, Fire, Boom Boom Boom, Music, Beauty, The Ridge, Room,* and passing them on to noted performers in the US, Europe, and Australia. She also choreographed a duet for herself and Mikhail Baryshnikov, *Single Duet,* which toured with the Past/Forward project in 2000.

Her third book, My Body, The Buddhist (Wesleyan University Press, 2000) is an introspective series of reflections on the major lessons of life that she has learned from her body while dancing.

Hay's recent work centers on working with highly trained dancer and choreographers. In 2004 she received a NYC Bessie award for her choreography of the quartet *The Match*. In 2006 she choreographed "O, O" for 5 New York City choreographer/ dancers and then for 7 French dancers of comparable experience. The Festival d'Automne, in Paris, presented *The Match* in 2005 and the French "O, O" in 2006. They also presented *If I Sing To You*, in 2008, a work commissioned by The Forsythe Company. The Toronto Dance Theatre commissioned and performed *Up Until Now* in 2009.

Deborah received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Dance in October 2009 from the Theater Academy in Helsinki. The website for the Deborah Hay Dance Company is www.deborahhay.com.

Jennifer Tipton, Lighting Designer

Jennifer Tipton is an internationally recognized lighting designer whose distinctive lighting has redefined the relationship between lighting and performance. Tipton has been an important presence in dance, drama, and opera productions of all scales; she is regarded as one of the most versatile designers working today.

Best known for her work in dance, Tipton's painterly lighting evokes mood and atmosphere while defining and sculpting movement. Preferring a limited but powerful palette of colors, she pioneered the use of white light in theater and dance. For both small theater and Broadway productions, Tipton's artistry interacts intimately with the work's physical appearance and emotional resonance. As a committed teacher, Tipton has influenced a generation of lighting designers and her dramatic imagination continues to push the visual boundaries of lighting for the theater in new and exciting directions.

Her recent work in NYC includes the Paul Taylor Company at City Center, Wheeldon's DGV for the Corella Ballet at City Center, *The Glass Menagerie* at the Roundabout Theater and the Wooster Group in North Atlantic at the Baryshnikov Arts Center. She is thrilled again to be lighting the work of Deborah Hay.

Tipton received a BA (1958) from Cornell University. She has designed the lighting for numerous dance performances for such companies as the New York City Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre, Twyla Tharp Dance, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company and for theatrical productions at such venues as St. Ann's Warehouse, the Public Theater, the Metropolitan Opera, and the new Jerome Robbins Theater at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, among many others. Since 1981 she has served as adjunct professor of lighting at the Yale University School of Drama.

CENTER FOR WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES (CWGS)

Started by a handful of faculty and students in 1979, CWGS now has over two hundred and fifty faculty affiliates, several degree programs, and hundreds of students who participate in our programs. We have a growing national reputation in the women and gender studies community.

Understanding the barriers to women's success and creating programs that promote women's leadership requires good gender studies research and the presence of strong role models within universities. The Center for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin is dedicated to closing the leadership gap through a variety of initiatives that:

- Promote ground breaking interdisciplinary research in the study of women and gender
- Support undergraduate women students in their pursuit of leadership
- Assist women faculty so that they may succeed in their chosen fields and serve as mentors and role models for their students

By offering a wide variety of programs and events that allow our faculty, students and community members to share their experience and expertise, CWGS creates a learning and research environment that is responsive to the lives and concerns of the people in our community.

An Uncanny Beauty: A Celebration of the Work of Deborah Hay Symposium

April 8, 2010 Blanton Museum of Art Edgar A. Smith Building, Blanton Auditorium

Rino Pizzi, Coordinator

AGENDA

10:00-II:30 AM - Consciousness, Body, and Practice Chair: Susan Heinzelman Panel: Christopher House, Tere O'Connor, Karen Schaffman

11:30 AM-1:15 PM - Lunch Break

1:15-2:45 PM - Politics, Counterculture, and Community Chair: Charlotte Canning Panel: Bill Bissell, Danielle Goldman, Gabriel Smeets

3:00-4:30 PM - Aesthetics, Art, and History Chair: Rebecca Rossen Panel: Ann Daly, Nina Martin, Selma Odom

5:30 PM - Keynote Address Dr. Susan Foster "Practicing Thinking Dancing"

> Please join us for a reception following the event Edgar A. Smith Building, Mezzanine

FUNDING CREDITS

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Sponsored by the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and co-sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies, the College of Fine Arts, the Department of Theater and Dance, and UT's Performance as Public Practice.

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APPENDIX D

The Rightness of Movement: Photographs by Phyllis Liedeker Finley of the work of Deborah Hay (1982-97)

THE RIGHTNESS OF MOVEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHYLLIS LIEDEKER FINLEY OF THE WORK OF DEBORAH HAY (1982-1997)

Blanton Museum of Art Edgar Smith Building, Mezzanine April 8, 2010

Presented by the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the Fine Arts Library

A special thank you to Women and Their Work Art Gallery and Nancy Scanlan

TITLES

- 1. Tribute to Growth (1983/2010)
- 2. The Movement of Light (1983/2010)
- 3. Tasting the Blaze I (1985/2010)
- 4. Tasting the Blaze II (1985/2010)
- 5. Tasting the Blaze III (1985/2010)
- 6. Tasting the Blaze IV Abundance (1985/2010)
- 7. Sweet (1986/2010) SOLD
- 8. Snakeskin's Girl I (1986/2010)
- 9. Snakeskin's Girl II (1986/2010)
- 10. Snakeskin's Girl III (1986/2010)
- 11. The Man Who Grew Common in Wisdom I (1987/2010)
- 12. The Man Who Grew Common in Wisdom II (1987/2010)
- 13. Lamb, lamb, lamb... I (1991/2010)
- 14. Lamb, lamb, lamb...II (1991/2010)
- 15. Lamb, lamb, lamb...III (1991/2010)
- 16. Lamb at the Altar (1992/2010)
- 17. (1993/2010)
- 18. My Heart I (1995/2010)
- 19. My Heart II (1995/2010) SOLD
- 20. Voilà (1997/2010) SOLD

The photographs are 9x14 black and white prints on archival paper, matted and framed for sale at \$300.00 each. The framed prints themselves will be delivered after the exhibition. The photographs can also be seen at:

www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cwgs/news/2690

Phyllis Liedeker Finley is a photographer and printmaker residing in Corpus Christi, Texas. While living in Austin, she photographed the work of Deborah Hay for 15 years. She has a B.A. degree with honors from Sophie Newcomb College, New Orleans, Louisiana, and did post-graduate work at the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. In addition to photographing Deborah Hay, for thirty years she has been investigating in her work the meanings of "Home" and "Heaven."

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Please contact Nancy Ewert at newert@mail.utexas.edu or at 512-471-5680 for more information or to purchase a print (sorry, no credit cards)





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